



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**Office of the Commissioner**



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**Testimony for the Government Administration & Elections Committee**  
**Regarding**  
**SB 252 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**  
**Monday, March 25, 2019**

Good morning Chairs Flexer and Fox, Vice Chairs Haskell and Winkler, Ranking Members France and Sampson, and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Senate Bill 252, *AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONNECTICUT FOOD POLICY COUNCIL*.

The Department of Agriculture (DoAG) believes the goals of Senate Bill 252 could be accomplished with the existing statute, which charges the council to develop, coordinate and implement “a food system policy linking local economic development, environmental protection and preservation with farming and urban issues,” among other relevant goals already contained in section 22-456(c). Through filling vacancies and ensuring the Food Policy Council funding described in section 22-456(d) is available, we believe more can be accomplished even with the existing statute.

However, should the legislature move forward with this legislation we have specific areas of concern:

- 1) **Membership.** Senate Bill 252 increases the size of the Food Policy Council from its current membership of 12 (6 from state agencies and 6 from other sectors of the food system), to a membership of 19 members (9 from state agencies and 10 from other areas of the food system.)

The increase in membership also comes with some changes by adding several members from local or statewide food commissions who would be appointed by leadership of the legislature. Further, in adding these new members, the proposed bill would remove two current appointments; a Food Retailer and a Produce Wholesaler.

While DoAg does not have a strong opinion on these changes overall, an increase in membership on the Council and a greater level of participation from food commissions can be positive. However, given the sectors of the food system included in the current Council, and with the stated intent of SB 252 to strengthen the Council, DoAg believes the appointments of a Food Retailer and a Produce Wholesaler should be retained.

- 2) **Term Limits.** Limiting terms to three years could cause some confusion for state agencies and the Council due to potential changes in the executive branch every four years. DoAg recommends that, at least in the case of a state agencies, the language states four year terms and the potential for reappointment from a continuing or new administration.

- 3) **Quorum.** Especially given the increased number of members on the Council a result of this bill DoAg recommends that a quorum be specified in the bill. DoAg recommends a quorum be specified as “a majority of those members appointed to the Council”, so business of the Council can be conducted whether or not all of the appointments have been made.

As stated above, DoAg believes this bill could be accomplished with the existing Food Policy Council but we also recognize the intent of this proposal and the efforts to work closer with local and statewide food policy networks and commissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed bill. We would be happy to work with the proponents of this bill on any language changes being considered as a result of these comments. You can reach Nathan Wilson, our Legislative Liaison, at (860) 713-2528 or [nathan.wilson@ct.gov](mailto:nathan.wilson@ct.gov).